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ABSTRACT

The social studies unit involves students in learning about how their families and neighbors view their community. In addition, students identify community issues and problems, and explore their own attitudes about their community. It is designed for use in grade five through junior high school. There are four parts to the community study project. During part one, students interview members of their own families about reasons for living in this particular community, positive community features, population size, economic and cultural life, use of leisure time, job market, and important historical events. Part two involves a visit to community officials and an interview relating to the community's strengths, problems, and changes over the past 20 years. In part three, students analyze the responses from parts one and two and use the information to make individual reports about their own attitudes toward the community. Students consider whether they would like to settle in the community, what they could eventually do there that would be important, and what they can do right now to improve the community. Part four involves a community forum during which students work in groups to identify community problems, write proposals for change, and create a community song, story, and symbol. Student worksheets and a teacher's guide for conducting the forum are included. (AV)

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MY COMMUNITY

A Community Study Project

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Georgia Rice, Superintendent

January, 1978

SP 010 920

Prepared by the Office of Public Instruction,
Georgia Rice, Superintendent.

January, 1978

Note: portions of the workshop format were adapted from materials prepared by the Institute of Cultural Affairs, Billings, Montana.

"MY COMMUNITY" - A COMMUNITY STUDY PROJECT

Objective of the project: Students will learn how their family and neighbors view the community they live in, learn what some of the current issues and problems are, and explore their own feelings and attitudes about their community. They will then participate in a "forum" through which they will name the challenges facing their community, and make some practical proposals for meeting those challenges.

PART I - FAMILY INTERVIEW

Have the students interview their family and family friends by asking questions decided on in class. (Students could take notes or use a tape recorder.) Sample questions:

1. Why do we live in this community? Is it from choice? Is it for some other reason? What is the best (or most unique) feature of this community?

2. Does our community have too many people, the right amount, or not enough? How does this affect life in the community?

3. What kind of people are we economically, socially, culturally? How do we compare in these respects with other towns in our state?

4. How do people here use their leisure time? Do they mostly spend it individually, as families, in groups of families? Do the people mostly watch things (TV, games, etc.) or do they actively do things? Are there opportunities for recreation and self-expression that aren't being used? Do people think there is nothing to do, or are there plenty of things to do?

5. What occupations (jobs) are available in our community? What don't we have that some other communities do, and why don't we? What would happen to the community if businesses and industry moved elsewhere, or went out of business? What would make them do this?

6. What events in our community's past are people proud of? How does this make our community different from all others? Has anything of historical significance been preserved?

PART II - VISIT TO COMMUNITY OFFICIAL(S)

Plan a visit to one or more official: mayor, city manager, city commissioner, county commissioner, councilman, alderman. Prepare in advance questions for this person (or these people) to answer or discuss. Sample questions:

1. What are the great strengths of our community: skills and knowledge of its people, special family or religious patterns, things produced for our own use, or

for the use of others? Which of these things would you like to have serve as a model for other communities?

2. Do you know of any serious problems of the community? How did they come about? What would have to happen for the problem to get solved?

3. Is our community changing in any important ways? How does it differ from what it was 20 years ago (life styles, occupations, wealth, growth)? What are some causes of the changes?

PART III - SELF ANALYSIS

Have students individually write answers to some questions about their own attitudes. Then have them volunteer some of their answers and have the class discuss them. Sample questions:

1. Should I settle down in this community?

2. What of importance could I eventually do here?

3. What could I do right now to make my community a better place to live?

4. What is likely to happen to this community in the future, and how will this affect my decisions about staying here or going somewhere else?

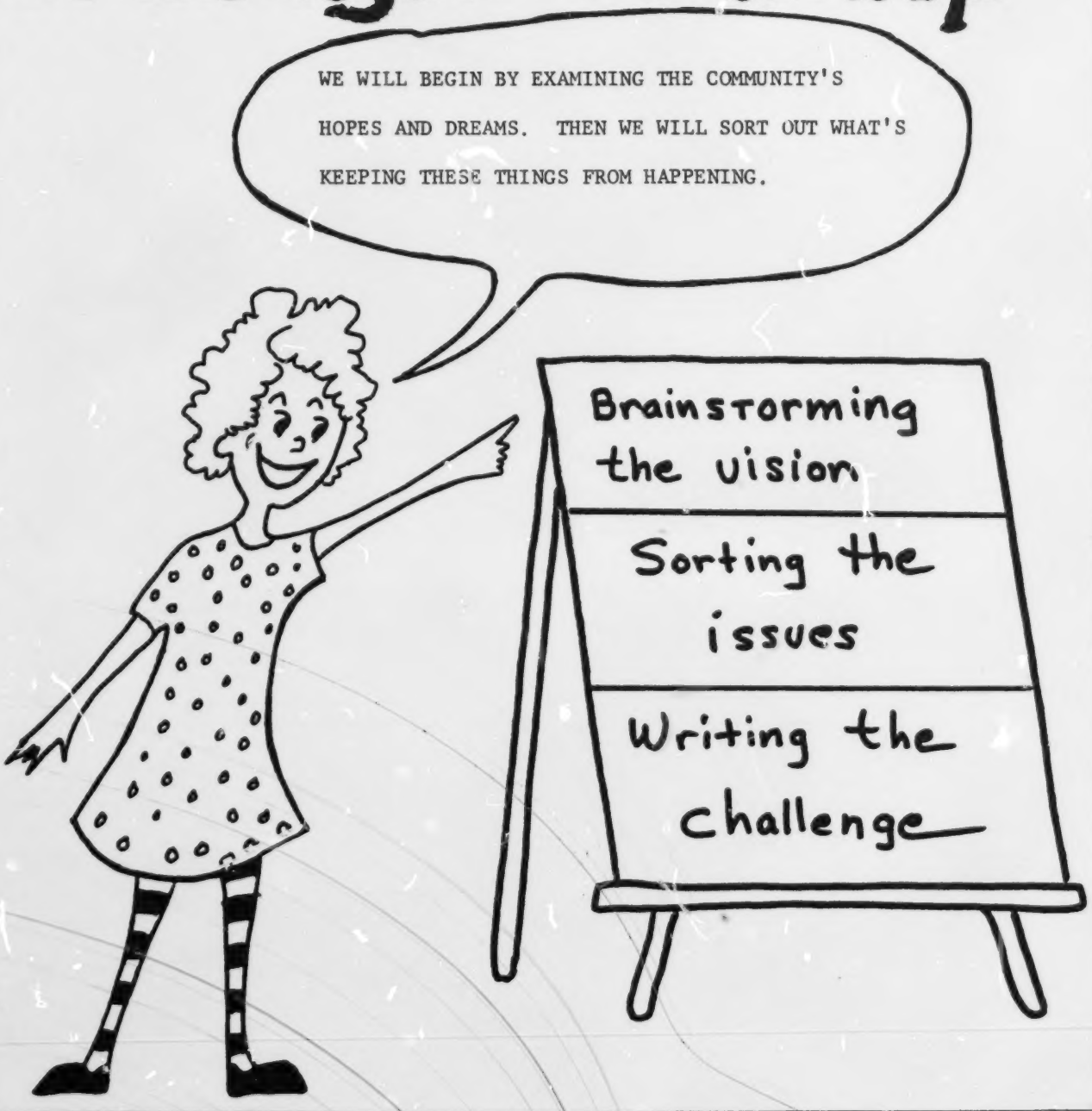
PART IV - COMMUNITY FORUM

There are several ways to conduct the forum. At the minimum, the challenges workshop and proposals workshop should take about 1½ hours each, with about 2 hours to write the song, story and symbol. However, since the "celebration" aspect of the forum is important to set the tone for constructive, positive thinking, it would be good to plan a whole day for the forum. For a whole day session, plan to sing some lively traditional and patriotic songs at intervals (beginning, at breaks, at the end), and plan some sort of celebration for the noon break, e.g., a talent show, a special lunch. The students could make posters and decorations in advance so that the room will be festive. The teacher will be the workshop leader, but should arrange to have a couple of students, aides, or parents as helpers. The forum could be for the class only, or could bring in other classes, parents, the principal, etc. If more than the class is involved, the students might want to make posters, banners and invitations. Each participant should be given a workbook to use and keep, and a document which includes the challenges, proposals, song, story and symbol should be made and copies distributed to everyone who participated.

Office of Public Instruction
Georgia Rice, Superintendent

WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE FACE?
LET'S CELEBRATE OUR PAST AND OUR FUTURE!
COMMUNITY FORUM
WHAT DO WE PROPOSE TO DO?

Overview of Challenges Workshop


WE WILL BEGIN BY EXAMINING THE COMMUNITY'S HOPES AND DREAMS. THEN WE WILL SORT OUT WHAT'S KEEPING THESE THINGS FROM HAPPENING.
Brainstorming the vision
Sorting the issues
Writing the challenge

BRAINSTORMING THE ISSUES

What are your hopes and dreams for your community? In other words, what would you like to see going on in the future?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Your hopes and dreams for the future may be prevented by certain situations. In your community, what problems or issues cause concern for you?
LIST YOUR OWN IDEAS HERE:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Circle the number of your one most important idea.

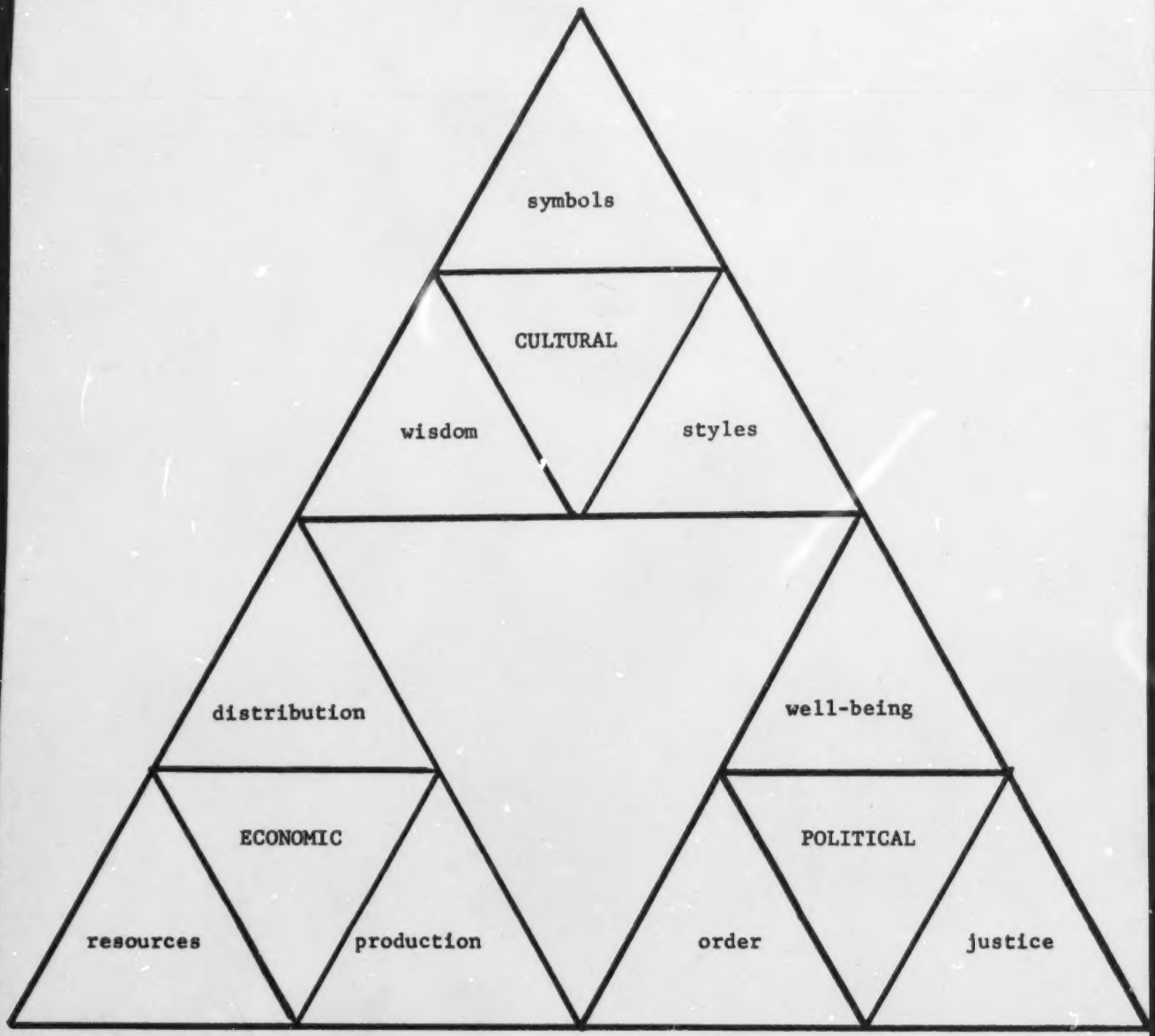
Share your best idea with the group when your teacher asks for it.

SORTING THE ISSUES

List on this chart the 20 most important issues chosen by the group as they are written on the blackboard or wall chart:

ISSUE	ISSUE
1.	11.
2.	12.
3.	13.
4.	14.
5.	15.
6.	16.
7.	17.
8.	18.
9.	19.
10.	20.

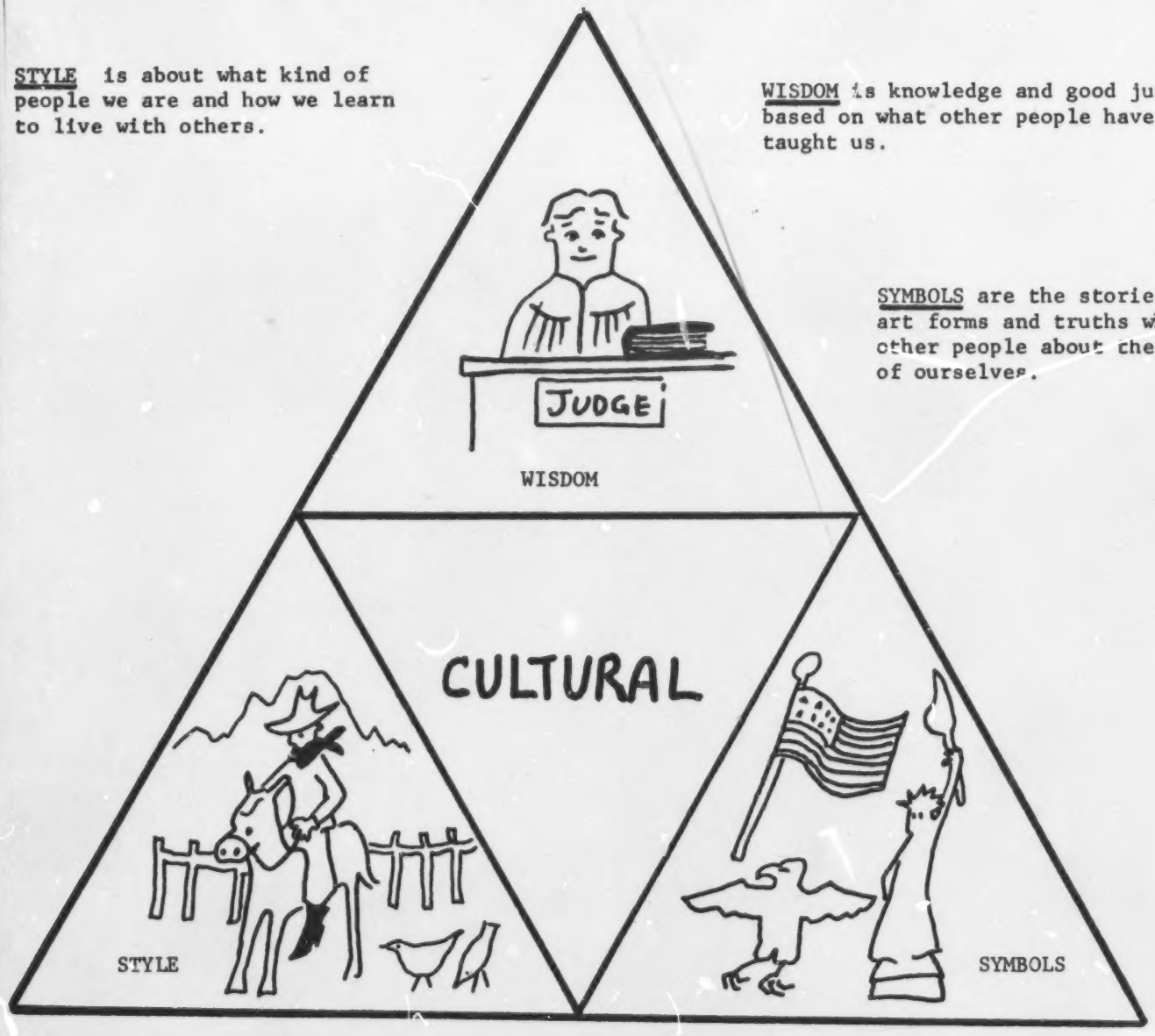
Now we will sort these 20 issues. Look at the large triangle and decide whether each issue is ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, or CULTURAL (see the next 4 pages for some hints about what each triangle within the large triangle means). Your teacher will help you place each issue somewhere on the large triangle.


symbols
CULTURAL
wisdom
styles
distribution
well-being
ECONOMIC
POLITICAL
resources
production
order
justice

STYLE is about what kind of people we are and how we learn to live with others.

WISDOM is knowledge and good judgment based on what other people have taught us.

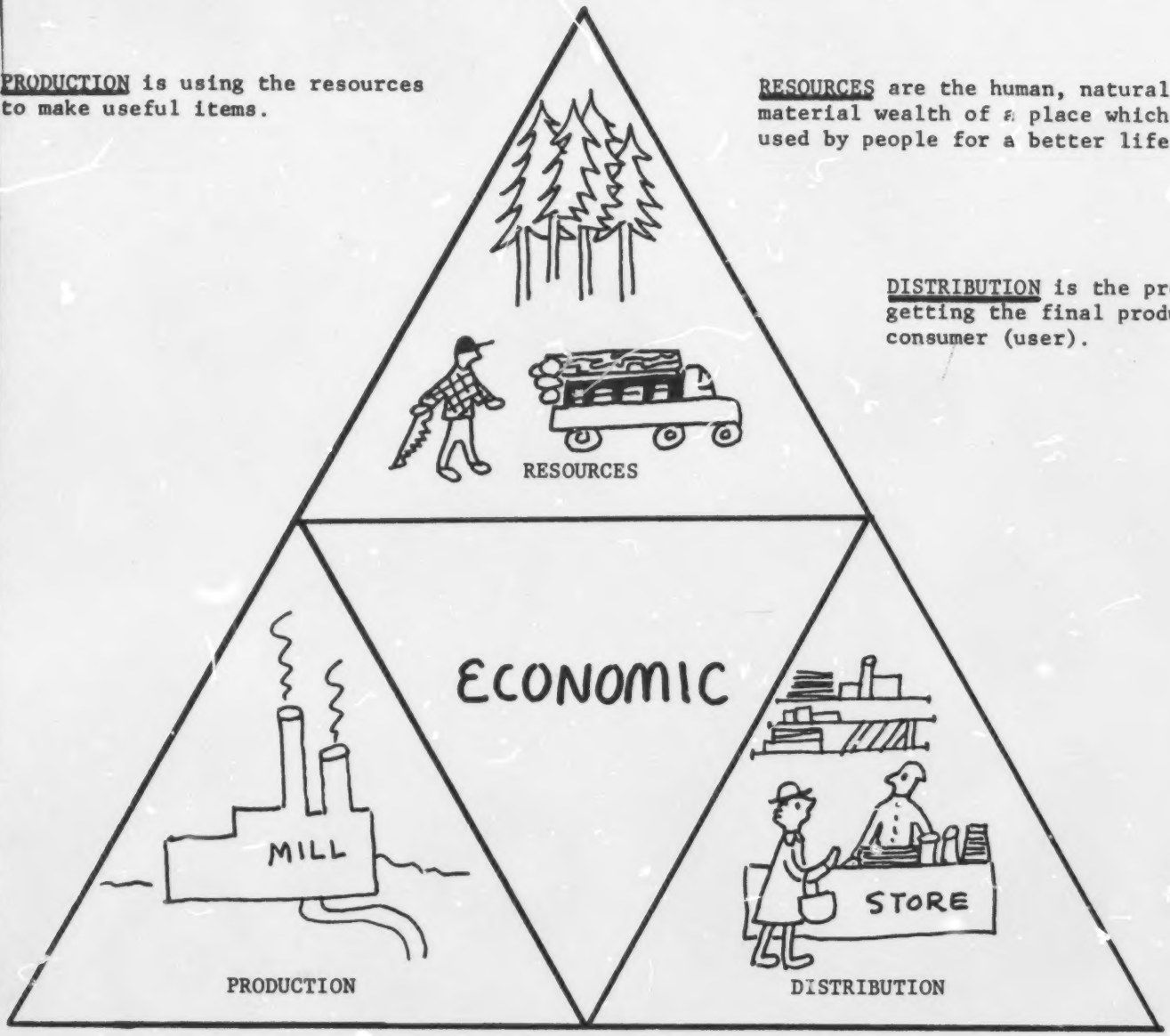
SYMBOLS are the stories, legends, art forms and truths which tell all other people about the way we think of ourselves.



PRODUCTION is using the resources to make useful items.

RESOURCES are the human, natural and material wealth of a place which are used by people for a better life.

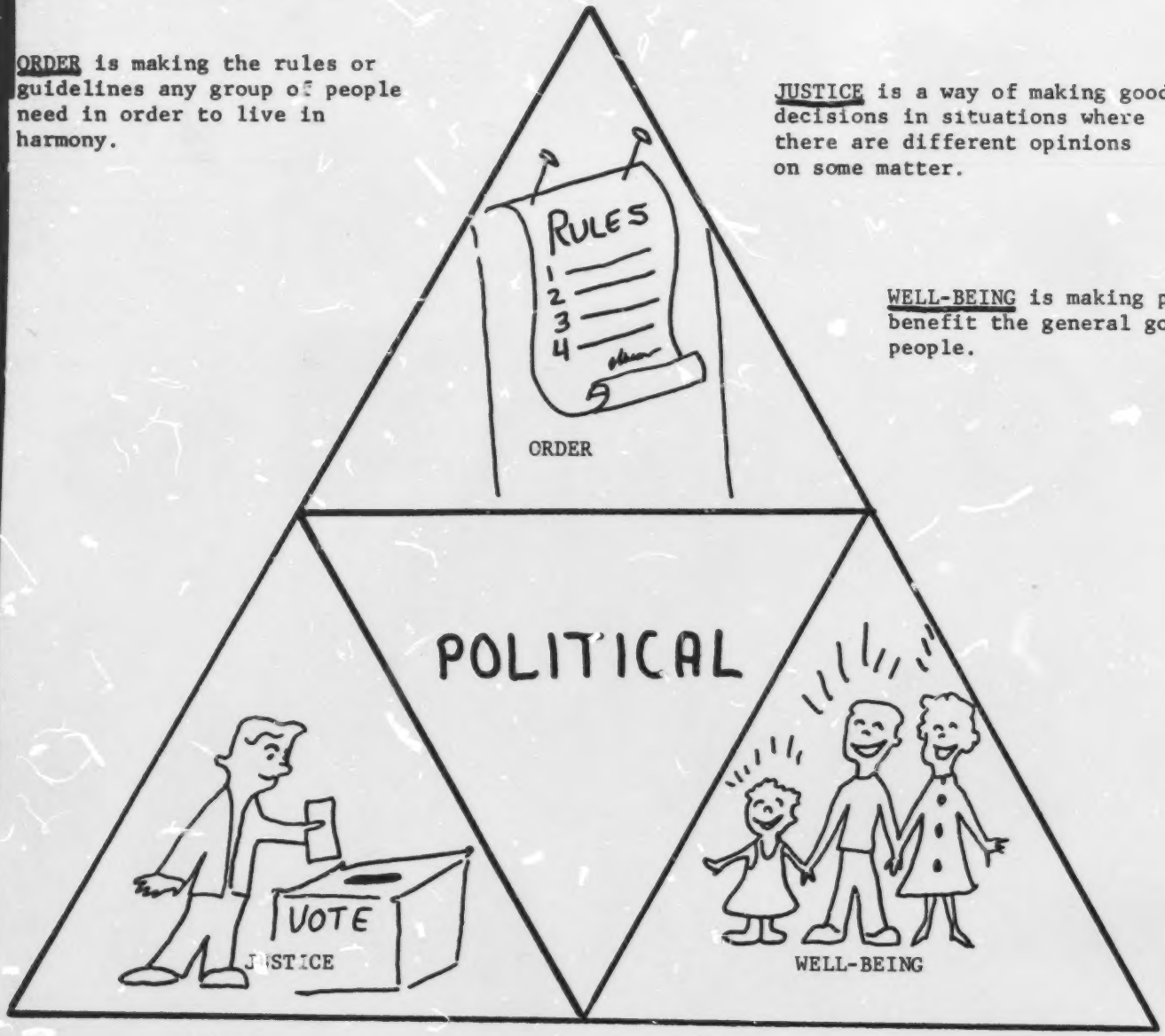
DISTRIBUTION is the procedure for getting the final products to the consumer (user).



ORDER is making the rules or guidelines any group of people need in order to live in harmony.

JUSTICE is a way of making good decisions in situations where there are different opinions on some matter.

WELL-BEING is making policies benefit the general good of people.



WRITING THE CHALLENGES

Now you will be working in small groups. You will use your group of issues or problems to write a description of a challenge your community must meet.

1. List the issues assigned to your small group:

   1.

   2.

   3.

   4.

   5.

2. What do all these issues have in common? What one thing is happening that keeps the issues from being solved easily? Discuss this in your small group. Then write down this one underlying problem.

   THE PROBLEM UNDERLYING THESE ISSUES IS:_____

   _____

   _____.

3. List 2 or 3 specific examples of this problem in your community:

   1._____

   2._____

   3._____

4. Now, using the ideas you have discussed, write your group's challenge statement on the next page. Look over the statement carefully to be sure it makes sense to anyone who reads it.

5. Make up a short title which best describes the underlying problem.

6. Select one person from your small group to read the statement to the whole group.

_____

(TITLE)

In our community, _____ _____ the following _____
(name of community)

issues: _____

_____

(list two or more issues)

indicate that the underlying problem is _____

_____

Two examples of this in our community are (1) _____

_____ and (2) _____

10

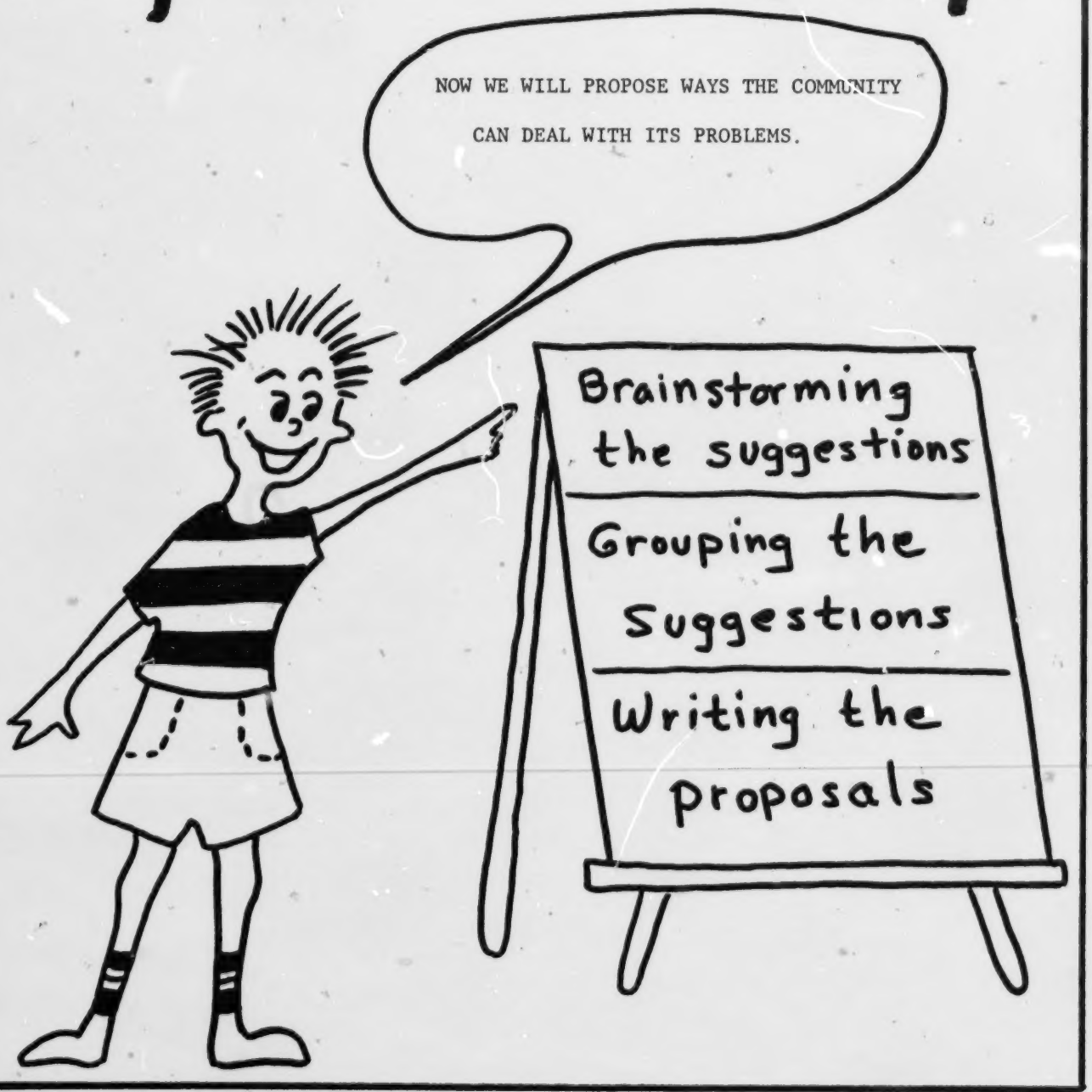
CHALLENGE STATEMENT

TAKE A BREAK! HAVE FUN!

GET READY FOR THE NEXT STEP

"Meeting the Challenges"

Overview of Proposals Workshop


NOW WE WILL PROPOSE WAYS THE COMMUNITY CAN DEAL WITH ITS PROBLEMS.
Brainstorming the suggestions
Grouping the Suggestions
Writing the proposals

BRAINSTORMING THE SUGGESTIONS		
CHALLENGE TITLES List each challenge title in this column.	PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS For each challenge, write down one idea of what could be done to solve the underlying problem.	✓ Check your best idea.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

We want to get several suggestions for each challenge, so choose your best suggestion to share with the whole group. The teacher will write them all down.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

Now you will be working in small groups. Each group will have one challenge title and all the practical suggestions for meeting that challenge.

1. What is your challenge title: _____

2. List the practical suggestions for meeting this challenge:

   1. _____

   2. _____

   3. _____

   4. _____

   5. _____

3. Discuss among yourselves what is the one most important reason for doing these suggested things. In other words, what one thing do these suggestions have in common? When you decide, write your group's answer in one sentence or phrase:

   _____

   _____.

4. Next ask yourselves, "What is one practical activity that will accomplish this aim?" or "What could be done to achieve this intent?" Discuss, and write the group's suggestion here:

   _____

   _____

   _____.

5. What are the first steps that should be taken to make this happen in your community:

   _____

   _____

   _____.

6. Now put these ideas into the proposal statement on the next page. Read the statement over to be sure it makes sense to anyone who reads it. Make up a short title for your statement.

7. After you have written your statement, choose one person to read it to the whole group.

_____

(Proposal Title)

We, the emerging generation of _____

(name of community)

in order to _____

_____

(most important reason)

propose to _____

_____

(practical activity)

through _____

_____

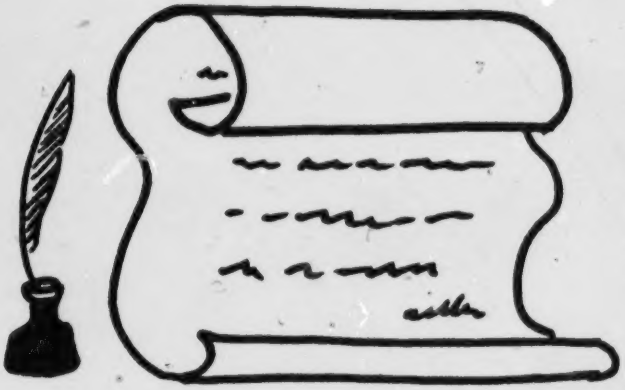
(first steps)

PROPOSAL STATEMENT

Creating The New

SONG

STORY



SYMBOL

BRAINSTORMING AN IMAGE OF OUR COMMUNITY

Individually list your ideas about these three questions:

1. What are some important events or achievements from your community's past?

2. What are some important events going on now?

3. What are some hopes you have for your community in the future?

List the ideas of the group here:

PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE

GROUP 1 - WRITING THE NEW SONG

1. As a group, discuss the qualities of a good tune. It should be one that everyone knows. Hum one or two tunes and ask yourself, "What do I like about that music?" Decide among yourselves which song would work best as the tune for your new song.

2. Work space for writing the new song:

(to the tune of:_____)

GROUP 2 - WRITING THE NEW STORY

1. Individually write a sentence or two about your community's past, present and future:

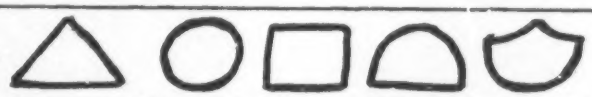
   Past:

   Present:

   Future:

2. Within your group, read your sentences aloud. Combine the sentences into a paragraph which tells the story of the community:

GROUP 3 - CREATING THE NEW SYMBOL

1. In the space below, draw a large shape 

2. Think of some objects or activities that represent some of the ideas you talked about earlier, such as houses, buildings, trees, people doing various things. Choose three things that you could draw to illustrate the past, present and future of your community. Draw those three in the large shape.

DRAW YOUR SYMBOL HERE:

3. On a large sheet of paper, make one large symbol using the 3 best ideas from the group's symbols.

COMMUNITY FORUM: TEACHERS' GUIDELINES

Minimum suggested time:

I Challenges workshop - 1½ hours
II Proposals workshop - 1½ hours
III Song, Story and Symbol workshop - 2 hours
Wrapup session - 20 minutes

(tell students how much time they have for each step)

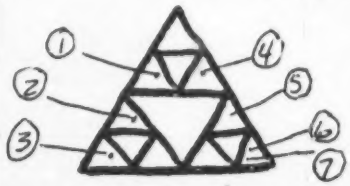
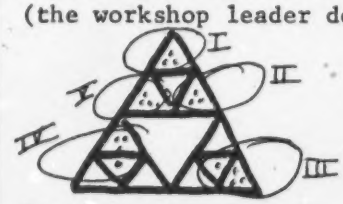
Supplies and materials needed

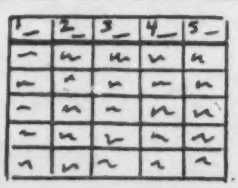
- large blackboard or 1 large wall chart
- colored markers (also paint?) and black markers
- 40 pieces of cut paper, approximately 2"x4"
- enough workbooks for each participant to have one
- 5 large (e.g., 30"x25") Challenge Statement forms (same as page 10)
- 5 large (") Proposal Statement forms (same as page 15) (optional)
- 1 large "practical suggestions" chart (see last page of teachers' guidelines)
- 3 large pieces of paper for Song, Story & Symbol workshop
- 1 large triangle chart (same as page 5)

I CHALLENGES WORKSHOP

PROCEDURAL NOTES	PRACTICAL HINTS	*
Page 3 Quickly brainstorm hopes and dreams. Record several main ideas (visions). 5 minutes	Use wall chart or blackboard to record	WG
Have students individually list 5 problems or issues which block the realization of the visions and circle their best idea. 10 minutes		I
Pages 4 - 8 Ask each student in turn to give his/her best idea and list them on the chart or blackboard. Number them 1 - 20. While the students are copying the 20 issues in their workbooks, have a helper put each issue on a separate slip of paper, numbered as they are on the chart. 15 minutes	It is important to have one idea from each student, but you should end up with 20 issues Put the 20 issues chart and the triangle chart side by side	WG
Have students look at the triangles on pages 4,5,6 and 7. Briefly review the categories with the students. 5 minutes		WG

* SG = "small groups"; WG = "whole group"; I = "individually

Plot each issue, by number, on the triangle chart. Have the students decide placement as much as possible, but help out if this process gets bogged down.  15 minutes	Students should use their intuition in plotting. This should be fun, not labored.	WG
Group the issues quickly into 4 or 5 clusters. Number the clusters (the workshop leader does this).  1 minute	The purpose of this step is to combine similar issues for work in small groups.	
Break up into as many small groups as there are clusters. Give each group all the slips of paper containing the issues in that cluster. 3 minutes	While the small groups are forming, have the helper sort the 20 slips with numbered issues on them by clusters.	SG
Page 9 Have students write their group's issues in the workbooks, then have them discuss what one thing is keeping these issues from being resolved. Have them decide on one idea and write it in their workbook and then write down 2 or 3 local examples. 15 minutes	If you use helpers, have them help each group with page 9 instructions. Otherwise, go from group to group to make sure the instructions are clear. It helps to read some samples of a finished product.	SG
Page 10 (instructions on page 9) Have each small group decide on a single statement and write it on page 10. To do this, they will select and list two or more of the issues from #1, page 9. Then they will copy the underlying problem from #2, page 9. They should then select two of the best local examples. The title should be a short phrase which describes the underlying problem.	Do the title last; don't spend too much time on it. Again, it might help to have a sample of an actual challenge statement to show.	SG

While the small group is writing the Challenge Statement, give each group the large form and ask someone to copy the statement onto the large form. When all statements are written, ask one person from each group to read the statement aloud to the whole group. 20 minutes		SG WG
BREAK		
II PROPOSALS WORKSHOP		
PROCEDURAL NOTES	PRACTICAL HINTS	*
Page 13 Put the challenge statements on the wall where everyone can see them. Have each person copy the titles in the first column. 3 minutes		WG
Have each student individually write one possible solution (suggestion) to each challenge and then check their one best idea. 15 minutes		I
Write the challenge titles in at the top of the large "Practical Suggestions" chart. Ask students to read aloud their one best idea and what challenge title it goes with. Write the suggestion in a square under the appropriate challenge title. Try to get an equal number of ideas for each title.  20 minutes	Be sure you have a large "Practical Suggestions" chart made up in advance (see last page for form). Alternative: quickly draw a chart on the blackboard. Have someone write each suggestion on a small piece of paper and identify which title it goes with by the title number.	WG
Page 14 Break into small groups--one for each challenge title. Hand each group the slips of paper (suggestions) that go with that challenge title, so that each		SG

group has one challenge title and all the suggestions for that title. 3 minutes		
Each person should fill in items #1 and 2 in the workbooks. 5 minutes	If you use helpers, have them help each group with page 14 instructions. Otherwise, go from group to group to make sure the instructions are clear. It helps to have some samples of these steps.	I
Have the students read and work on items #3,4 and 5. 20 minutes		I
<u>Page 15 (instructions on page 14).</u> Have each small group decide on a single statement and write it on page 15. To do this, they will copy the "most important reason" from #3, page 14, and the "practical activity" from #4, page 14. They should list at least two "first steps." 15 minutes	It will help to have an example of an actual Proposal Statement to show. Do the title last or they will spend too much time on it. Explain that "first steps" are the first things that should be done toward carrying out the practical activity.	SG
While the small group is writing the Proposal Statement, give each group the large form and ask someone to copy the statement onto the large form. (Optional)		
When all statements are written, ask one person from each group to read the statement aloud to the whole group. 10 minutes		WG
<u>NOTE</u>: If the workshop ends here, gather the whole group together and discuss the process they just went through. Sample questions: 1. Which of these proposals caught your attention? Why? 2. What surprised you about this workshop? What did you learn? 3. Can you suggest any follow-up activities?		WG
(If you go directly on to the "Song, Story and Symbol" workshop, do this step last.)		

III SONG, STORY AND SYMBOL WORKSHOP		
PROCEDURAL NOTES	PRACTICAL HINTS	*
Page 17 Have the whole group individually list their ideas about items #1, 2 and 3. 10 minutes	Suggest that the students think of visual images (e.g., colorful or dramatic events, names of famous or infamous people).	I
Then have them read aloud the ideas. Record the ideas on a wall chart, divided into "past", "present", and "future" columns. Circle the dominant images. 10 minutes	Explain that these images will be used for the song, story and symbol.	WG
Divide the group into 3 small groups. Each will work on either the song, the story or the symbol. One person from each group should write down the dominant images.	Make sure each small group has plenty of space to work. Separate rooms are desirable. THESE GROUPS WILL BE WORKING SIMULTANEOUSLY.	SG
Note: Someone should work with each group to see that the work progresses on schedule.		
Page 18 (Group I: Song)		
Have this group decide on a tune that will be easy to work with. 10 minutes	Provide a large piece of paper and some worksheets.	
Have students decide as a group on the words. One person should write the words down as work progresses. 1 hour, 20 min.	Be sure to watch the time; this should move along quickly.	SG
(The group should periodically sing through the song to make sure all the syllables fit.)	One verse (or, maximum 2) and the chorus works the best.	
Have someone copy the final product on the large sheet of paper. 10 minutes		
Page 19 (Group II: Story)		
Have students work on part 1 individually using the "dominant images" as a start. 20 minutes		I
In part two, the students should combine their sentences to make a complete story. They can add to it as they go along. 1 hour, 10 min.		SG

Have someone copy the finished story onto a large sheet of paper. 10 minutes		
Page 20 (Group III: Symbol)		
Briefly discuss the meaning of symbols and give examples of a symbol (e.g., the American flag). 3 minutes	Provide plenty of colored markers, crayons, or paint and a broad black marker.	SG
Have students work on ideas in their workbooks. Each symbol should contain 3 things (representing past, present and future). 20 minutes		I
Have the group combine ideas and decide on one symbol. Have someone pencil it on a large sheet of paper. The whole small group should then help drawing it boldly and coloring it. 1 hour, 17 min.	Make sure the symbol is a joint product, not just the one "best" drawing.	SG
WRAP UP		
At the end, bring everyone together and share the song, story and symbol. Song: the song group should sing their song a couple of times; then the whole group should sing it. Story: have someone read the story to the whole group. Symbol: display the symbol and have that group explain the meaning.		
Discuss the Song, Story and Symbol Workshop (see note at the end of the "Proposals" workshop.)		WG

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS CHART

CHALLENGE TITLES					
1	2	3	4	5	
PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS					